



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

April 6, 2015

Ms. Joyce E. Casey
Chief, Environmental Resources Branch
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District, Portland
P.O. Box 2946
Portland, Oregon 97208-2946

Dear Ms. Casey:

Thank you for your letter of April 3, 2015, responding to EPA's March 16, 2015 comments on the Corps' final EIS on the Double-crested Cormorant (DCCO) Management Plan. Your letter and our recent conversation on April 2, 2015 provided clarity on the Corps' commitment to use adaptive management as an integral part of managing the East Sand Island DCCO population. We are supportive of the adaptive management program that will be undertaken by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Corps that will use results from comprehensive monitoring to achieve East Sand Island colony size objectives while ensuring conservation of western population of DCCOs. We understand that the most recent data regarding both populations, factors affecting them, and behavioral responses of DCCO and non-target species will be used to inform annual issuance of the USFWS depredation permit.

We also understand that the Corps is committed to carrying out specific responsibilities under the Federal Columbia River Power System 2014 Supplemental Biological Opinion that includes the reasonable and prudent alternative (RPA) to manage DCCO predation on salmonids. We also recognize that the Corps does not have responsibility for many of the EPA suggestions in our March 16, 2015, comment letter. The EPA recognizes that many of these suggestions, particularly those that focus on fishery management, such as hatcheries and catch restrictions, come under the responsibility of other Columbia River entities and forums.

The EPA understands that the FCRPS Biological Opinion RPA requirements and the adaptive management framework that is integral to the selected plan provide a framework intended to assure that cormorant populations will be carefully monitored, and management will be tailored to ensure reductions in juvenile salmonid predation and the health of the cormorant population. We recognize the challenges inherent in complex ecosystem management and appreciate the opportunity to share information and perspectives. Please feel free to contact me at 206-553-1601 or reichgott.christine@epa.gov if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine B. Reichgott".

Christine B. Reichgott, Manager
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit